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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000356

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E AND G/TIP  
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KJUS](#) [KPAO](#) [KCRM](#) [DJ](#) [FR](#)  
SUBJECT: BORREL CASE: DJIBOUTI ACCUSES FRENCH NATIONALS OF  
PEDOPHILIA

REF: DJIBOUTI 309

Classified By: PolOff Rebecca K. Hunter for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ten days after a French court convicted two senior Djiboutian officials on charges of witness subornation (reftel) in connection with investigations into the 1995 death of French magistrate Bernard Borrel in Djibouti, a Djiboutian court issued international arrest warrants for five French nationals on charges of child sexual abuse. The arrest warrants, which received prominent coverage in state-run media, are a result of the GODJ's ongoing investigation into a pedophilia ring allegedly active in Djibouti in the 1990s. Borrel's widow has accused the GODJ of involvement in his death, while the GODJ has continued to underscore that the original French investigation found that he had committed suicide. Moreover, the GODJ has suggested that Borrel's death may somehow have been linked to the activities of the alleged pedophilia ring, and has indicated that an unspecified number of additional French citizens are still under investigation in connection with the affair. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) On April 7, Djiboutian investigating magistrate Abdoulkader Ibrahim Issack issued arrest warrants against the following five French nationals--none of whom currently reside in Djibouti--for "acts of pedophilia" allegedly committed against students and street children under their care in Djibouti in the 1990s:

- Claude Sapkas-Keller, a former judicial advisor to previous Djiboutian president Hassan Gouled Aptidon
- Patrick Millon, a former communications advisor to previous Djiboutian president Hassan Gouled Aptidon
- Father Aubert, a priest formerly residing in Djibouti
- Frederic Graziani, a former physical science teacher in Djibouti
- Thierry Guibaud, a former history and geography teacher in Djibouti.

According to Issack, the warrants stem from complaints filed by two Djiboutian citizens, currently in their twenties. Beyond these five, Issack indicated that additional French diplomatic and military officials resident in Djibouti between 1994 and 1998 were under investigation for similar offenses.

13. (SBU) Djiboutian President Omar Ismail Guelleh announced a cabinet reshuffle on March 27, the same day the Versailles Court levied an in-absentia verdict against two senior Djiboutian officials on charges of illegally influencing the testimony of two witnesses in the Borrel case (reftel). In his first speech to the new Cabinet, Guelleh called for

action against those who "stole the innocence of our children," and accused France of trying to "hide the real cause of the death of Judge Borrel, pedophilia."

¶4. (SBU) The Borrel case has featured prominently in recent editions of Djibouti's state-run national newspaper, "La Nation." Under the headline "The French State Continues to Hide the Truth," a full-page article on April 9 included images of purported DGSE documents on the Borrel case, labeled "Confidential: Defense." Another version of the same article was reprinted on April 10, with a different set of imaged documents. The article claims that the accompanying documents were publicly available on the website "geopolitique.com" until a French court began questioning the journalist who posted them, Guillaume Dasquie.

¶5. (SBU) The "La Nation" coverage argues that the featured documents prove the French government's long knowledge that Borrel's death was, as the French officials here concluded in 1995, a suicide. In particular, the article points to a sentence from one document attesting that Borrel was "psychologically disturbed in the weeks which preceded his death." Two other documents are cited to call into question the credibility and motives of Mohamed Saleh Alhoumekani, one of the witnesses allegedly influenced illegally by the two convicted Djiboutian officials. These documents note Alhoumekani's history of disciplinary sanctions during his service in the Djiboutian Gendarmerie, and note that his testimony in the Borrel case "seems to be essentially motivated by his application for status as a political refugee in Belgium."

¶6. (C) COMMENT: These five arrest warrants may be just the opening salvo in the latest Franco-Djiboutian skirmish over

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the Borrel case, now thirteen years old but still overshadowing bilateral relations. The GODJ has promised to continue investigating those who "abused poor street children." While the main ring under investigation was allegedly active in the 1990s, the GODJ has not ruled out investigation into French personnel currently residing in-country. Despite the accusations and counter-accusations, the GODJ is not likely to let this incident rupture relations with France, particularly as Djibouti relies on the presence of nearly 3,000 French troops in Djibouti for its territorial defense under mutual agreements. END COMMENT.  
SYMINGTON